

Our Board of Trustees

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Toronto
District
School
Board

is to enable all students to reach high levels of achievement and to acquire the knowledge, skills, and values they need to become responsible members of a democratic society.

We value:

- each and every studen
- a strong public oducation system
- a partnership of students, schools, family, and communit
- the uniqueness and diversity of our students and our community
- the commitment an skills of our staff
- equity, innovation, accountability, and accossibility
- Isorning environments that are safe, nurturing, positive, and respectful.

MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

Since its amalgamation in January 1998, the Toronto District School Board (TDSB) has worked tirelessly to provide students with outstanding programs and services designed to meet their needs.

It is with great pride that I present on behalf of the Board and our 27,000 staff members, the Toronto District School Board's first annual report. This report outlines the work, activities and operations of the TDSB for the period of September 1, 1998 to August 31, 1999, the first full school year of our newly created school system.

From the beginning, our 22 elected trustees have demonstrated their commitment by working closely with senior staff to ensure that the steps required to amalgamate the seven public school systems of Toronto would not adversely affect students and our classrooms. In addition to managing this amalgamation process, much time and energy has been spent over the past year implementing the new provincial curriculum in our schools and managing the changes to our funding allocation.

Serving more than 300,000 students and 561 schools, the TDSB is the largest school system in the country. With over 90 languages and dialects spoken by our students and staff, we also have the most multi-ethnic and culturally diverse student and staff populations in Canada. As a result, our Board has some unique and diverse needs. We have successfully obtained some much-needed interim funding and will continue to communicate the special needs of our system to the government.

As we prepare for the 21st century, we will continue to work toward building a school system that is unmatched in its ability to meet student needs. We will continue to set clear priorities, design effective programs and structures, and be accountable for student success.

I trust that you will find the information contained in this report useful and that it gives you a complete picture of the work that is done to ensure that our students receive superior quality learning opportunities that are challenging, innovative, safe, and nurturing.

Sincerely,

Marquerite Jackon

Marguerite Jackson Director of Education

1998-99 highlights

The 1998-99 school year was both histy and productive. We overcame several challenges and schlewed a number of successes. Here are a few highlights of our accomplishments:

- Toronto students meet or exceed the provincial average in province-wide achievement tests
- first board in Canada to create an Academic Accountability department, responsible for improving student achievement
- fought to make the provincial funding model more responsive to the educational needs of students
- senior administration and central administrative staff cut by 50 percent; administrative space being reduced by twothirds.

Taking Responsibility for Student Success

To help monitor student achievement and develop strategies to improve achievement levels, the Board formed an Academic Accountability Department. One of the first of its kind for a school board, the Department uses student data to drive program improvement, student development, and public accountability.

We have also developed a foundation statement that reflects our strong commitment to public accountability, quality programming, and continuous improvement. Some of the highlights include:

- * high expectations for all learners
- effective student assessment and evaluation
- systemized review of school programs to improve the quality of education offered
- regular reporting to parents and the community on our results
- · development of students' abilities to evaluate themselves.
- commitment to providing our educators with all of the skills and knowledge needed to support achievement for all students.

You can see all of our foundation statements on our website at www.tdsb.on.ca.

Celebrating Diversity in our Schools

One of Toronto's greatest strengths as a city is its cultural diversity. It is a hub of immigration. More than half of Ontario's ethnic minorities settle in Toronto. Students - and their parents - speak a multitude of languages. The result is a dynamic cultural mosaic.

Because of this multicultural foundation, it is important for our public schools to continue to be leaders in promoting tolerance and opportunity for everyone. At the same time, our system must be able to deal with the challenges presented by this diversity – including nearly half of the population reporting. English as their second language.

We value the contributions of all members of our diverse community, and believe that equity of opportunity and access to our programs and services are vital to student achievement.

That is why we aim to use the variety of knowledge of all people as part of the way we teach and learn. Our students are taught to understand the causes of inequity, to recognize discrimination, and to build positive relationships with all people.

in every aspect of our operations, from hiring and promotion practices to how we resolve concerns about inequitable treatment, we work to promote true equity.

Keeping Students and Schools Safe

Effective teaching and true learning can only take place in safe and positive environments. We are working with students, staff, parents, and the community to keep our schools peaceful, healthy, and welcoming to all.

All students are taught violence prevention and ways to resolve problems peacefully, and every school has a code of behaviour and a safe school plan.

Our Board's policy is clear – violent, threatening, or unlawful acts are simply not tolerated. If violence does occur, our staff reacts quickly and consistently.



OPPORTUNITY FOR STUDENTS

The Challenge

Young people live in a rapidly changing world. The skills and knowledge they need to succeed are constantly evolving. As a result, the challenge of providing students with the tools and capabilities they will need for their futures is also changing.

This challenge is even greater for the Toronto District School Board. With the largest, most culturally and ethnically diverse student population of any school board in Canada, there is a wide variety of special needs to be met.

We welcome and celebrate this diversity as one of our greatest strengths. Learning in this multicultural environment provides our students with an increased sensitivity to the diversity that exists across the world.

By valuing every student and offering a safe, positive learning environment, we set the groundwork for offering top quality education. We design programs and implement a balanced curriculum that fits with the world of work, life-long learning, and citizenship that lies ahead of our students. Our goal is to help students acquire the skills, knowledge, and confidence they need reach their full potential as adults.

Our Actions

Here are some of the key initiatives that have been implemented in our school system to promote learning and to ensure that our programs continue to meet the needs of our students.

- established academic accountability and student success as a priority (see <u>Taking</u> <u>Responsibility for Student Success</u>)
- trained staff to implement the new Ontario Curriculum and Secondary School Reform
- implemented the new Ontario Curriculum in our elementary schools and Secondary School Reform in our secondary schools
- participated in the development of the provincial curriculum for elementary and secondary school
- established safe schools as a priority
 (see <u>Keeping Schools and Students Safe</u>)
- worked with our communities to develop policies to enhance student learning (ie. homework policy, etc.)

- changed the delivery of education programs to provide for efficient and effective results:
 - special programs such as <u>Tutors in the</u>
 <u>Classroom</u> to promote student learning
 - co-operative education programs provide opportunities for students to gain experience in work environments.

Our Vision

Our top priority is to provide excellent education for every student.

Our plans to achieve that goal include more community-based projects that focus on improving academic achievement, and more opportunities for students in cooperative education and school-to-work transitions.

The Board will continue to establish key policies – known as "foundation statements" – in important learning and policy areas.

Last year, foundation statements were developed in literacy, mathematics, equity and safe schools. This year, we will create new foundation statements for other major subject areas – arts, science and technology and environmental studies.

We are also embarking on a review of programs offered by the seven former Boards, including the delivery of early childhood education and literacy, French immersion, outdoor education, alternative schools, and middle level education in order to achieve comprehensive programming for all of our students.

As well, we will work to further improve the learning environment for students, cooperating with Toronto Police Services, Social Services, and the Public Health Department to ensure our schools are safe and healthy.





1. Every one of our schools has a school council, made up of elected parents, staff and students, as well as appointed community members and a general membership of all the parents of children in the school. These councils provide advice to the principal and school staff as well as the Board, and represent the interests of the students and local community.

2. Our Board trustees hear directly from communities through Ward Councils and Forums. Because Toronto's wards are so diverse in size (some are as large as provincial electoral ridings), some have a standing Council – drawn from the school councils and the community – while others hold regular forums where the parents set the agenda.

3. The new Parent-Community Network gives parents and community members who take part in these councils and forums a system for getting together to share information and ideas. Every ward is represented and any parent or community group can participate.

 Community Liamon Groups are made up of participants from across the city who work together and share a common interest.

TDSB Students Perform Above the Provincial Average on EQAO Tests

Students from the Toronto District School Board scored higher than the provincial average on Ontario-wide tests in both mathematics and writing. Our students also met the provincial standard in the reading component of the tests, which were given to Grade 3 and 6 students across Ontario in May.

Our Academic Accountability Department has prepared individual school profiles that outline individual school results on these tests. These profiles also highlight the programs and services offered at each of our schools and include an action plan for driving program development and student achievement.

A system-wide action plan to improve our programs and teacher training has also been developed. Literacy and mathematics initiatives were implemented across the system this past year to increase our teacher assessment and teaching skills. We will continue to develop and make additional training available to staff in order to promote higher student achievement.

For detailed results of the 1999 assessments, please visit our website at www.tdsb.on.ca.

ACCOUNTABILITY TO PARENTS

The Challenge

We believe that education is a shared responsibility – a partnership between parents, the community, students, staff, and the Board. We need people outside the education system to help us make sure the system is responding to community needs and expectations. Of all these partners, parents have the biggest stake and the most to offer.

All parents and members of our community have a valuable contribution to make to our schools. They also have the right to expect us to hear and respond to their concerns and ideas, and to be consulted on matters affecting their children.

The challenge to the Board is to ensure that all of these many and diverse voices are heard, and that we make every effort to include everyone in building an effective school system.

Once again, the sheer size and diversity of Toronto pose special challenges for us, but also provide the wide range of knowledge and ideas that create a tremendous resource.

Our Actions

Following is a look at some of the work that has been done to help build positive working relationships with our parents and communities and provide opportunities for them to help shape our school system.

- finalized the policy on Parent, Community and Student Involvement, including the establishment of the Ward forums and the Parent Community Network (see <u>How We Are</u> <u>Listening</u>)
- consulted with parents and communities across Toronto on our key policies such as Parent, Community and Student Involvement, Dealing with Abuse and Neglect of Students and Optional Attendance
- established advisory committees on special education and child care

- established Area Review Committees, comprised of staff, parents, and community members, to study the issue of school consolidations
- published the <u>Parent Guide to Special</u>
 Education
- implemented the new grade 9 provincial report card
- implemented the new K-8 provincial report card.

Our Vision

One of the key recommendations of the Education Improvement Commission's recent study of our Board was that more be done to improve communications and accountability with our communities. We agree, and are committed to working with, and being accountable to, the people and families we serve.

One of the most important ways schools communicate with their communities is through School Councils, Ward Councils and community groups. We will enhance those relationships by providing support, developing resource documents, and creating more opportunities for two-way communications.

We will continue to reach out to communities through our publications. Our website will soon grow again to link parents directly with schools, and we are implementing a new centralized phone number for parents and community members to reach us.

We are now studying other jurisdictions' experiences and best practices in howthey communicate and respond effectively with their communities so that we can continue to forge stronger partnerships here in Toronto.







THE TDSB TEAM

The Challenge

There are over 27,000 staff, including 17,000 teachers, that make up the TDSB team. This talented team of individuals is the driving force behind our Board. The work they do on a daily basis both inside and outside of the classroom is fundamental to the success of our schools and our students.

In addition to the daily challenges faced by our employees this past year, staff also had to deal with changes in provincial guidelines, funding arrangements, and the ongoing impact of the amalgamation process.

Recognizing the integral role that these individuals play and the increased expectations placed on our employees, the Board makes it a priority to listen to their concerns, identify their needs, and provide them with appropriate support.

While physical resources such as new teaching materials, leading edge resources, and training opportunities are very important, we also know that other kinds of support are equally vital. That is why we strive to recognize and celebrate the efforts of our teachers and staff and provide them with strong representation of their issues and concerns about public education.

Our Actions

Here is a brief overview of some of the key initiatives implemented to support our teachers and staff.

- produced special teaching resources and workshops to help teachers understand and respond to the new province-wide student achievement tests, and to better help their students respond to the new challenge
- provided new teaching materials and training for educators to implement The New Ontario Curriculum and new Ontario Report Cards
- negotiated first collective agreements for elementary, secondary, and occasional teachers as well as CUPE Local 4400 – a process that involved consolidating dozens of collective agreements from across the previous seven school boards
- helped implement the Teacher Advisor System to provide extra support for educators.

Our Vision

In this world of constant change, we know that the challenges for educators will continue to evolve. What will never change is the central role of teachers and staff in the partnership of learning, and the need for the Board to support that role.

One way we will help staff this year is through new professional development opportunities aimed directly at the challenges presented by the new curriculum and changing expectations.

As part of our ongoing work dealing with the after-effects of amalgamation, we will develop a uniform dispatch system for occasional teachers, and a standard way of allocating all teaching, support, and administrative staff.

We will provide educational research assistance to teachers that explores the connection between learning in the classroom and student success later in life.

Above all, we will continue to respond to the needs of educators by providing effective programs, improved policies and curriculum, and adequate resources for those who hold the most vital jobs in our society – educating our children.



Streamlining our system

The Board has reduced spending by nearly \$63 million a year through reductions in the 1999/2000 budget. Those reductions 'include:

- · seven boards to one
- 45 departments to six
- 98 supervisory officers to 45
- · seven technology systems to one
- one million sq. ft. of administration space to 375,000 sq. ft.
- central departments: 30-50 percent staff reductions
- management administration support:
 50 percent reduction
- reduction in vice principals, teacher consultants, and supply teachers (\$9.3 million)
- program (hanges in adult education (\$28.1 million)
- supervisory staff reductions (\$6 million)
- · support staff reductions (\$4 million)
- initial consolidation of continuing education (\$3.4 million)
- initial reduction in school operations (\$12 million).

Meeting the Amalgamation Challenge

in November, the provincial Education Improvement Commission (EIC) released its report on the Toronto District School Board's progress in amalgamating and festructuring our school system.

The report points out that the Board has been tackling a mammoth challenge in bringing seven different systems together, but has made significant progress. Most importantly, the report recognizes our work in consulting with our communities and forming a clear vision for the future.

For a copy of the EIC report, please visit our website at www.tdsb.on.ca.

EFFICIENCIES IN BOARD AND SCHOOL OPERATIONS

The Challenge

Fundamental changes in our education system have created a pressing need for new ways of thinking, planning, budgeting, and working. The Toronto District School Board recognizes the amalgamation process as an opportunity to reduce duplication and costs, ensure consistency across the system, and pursue innovative new ways to deliver services.

Amalgamation is complex and there are still many challenges to be resolved. Compounding the process has been the new provincial funding formula, which has further complicated decisions on how and where limited resources can be allocated.

But the process is on track, meeting its savings objectives, and making solid progress.

We have already achieved \$62.8 million in savings through amalgamation efficiencies, and have downsized and reorganized our administrative structure.

Since we are the largest board in Canada, we are determined to use our size to advantage in saving money on administration and bureaucracy. We recognize that a large organization can be more efficient, as long as it is carefully planned and well run.

At the same time, we are unequivocally committed to preserving the priority services for our students and our communities. One thing we refuse to downsize is expectations for student achievement.

Our Actions

Following are highlights of the key actions taken by our Board that demonstrate our commitment to fiscal responsibility and accountability.

 reduced senior administration by half and begun downsizing central administrative staff by 50 percent (see <u>Streamlining Our System</u>)

- started reducing administrative space from a million square feet to 375,000, a reduction of 66 percent
- cut the costs of operations by
 10 percent while maintaining the same levels of service
- consolidated seven operational budgets totaling \$273 million
- used competitive tendering to reduce natural gas costs by more than \$1 million a year, or nearly 8 percent
- upgraded two-thirds of our facilities to use water and energy more efficiently for estimated savings of \$9.7 million or 20 percent.

Our Vision

In order to meet our budget targets, we need to reduce our budget by another \$27 million this year. We plan to do this by streamlining adult day school programs, reducing the number of consultants and cutting another \$11 million from our central administration.

Looking to 2003-04, the new provincial funding formula will mean more reductions. Our \$2.1 billion budget will have to fall by about \$222.4 million. We've aiready identified where we think those cuts should be made (the biggest portion would come out of central administration).

In the meantime, we will continue to streamline our system and find savings that do not affect the quality of education in our schools. For example, we will consolidate the eight administrative centres across Toronto to four. Systems such as accounting, maintenance management, and security will be standardized and duplication will be eliminated.

We will continue to meet the expectations of the taxpayers who fund the education system, as well as those who depend upon it to provide excellence in public education.

THE 1998-99 FINANCIAL RESULTS

he 1998-99 fiscal year represented the first year of the implementation of the Ministry of Education's Student Focused Funding Model. The Board was provided mitigation funding totalling approximately \$302 million to bridge the difference between the Board's current level of expenditures and the Ministry's allocation to Board.

The results for the year reflect a balanced position in that the Board's total expenditures equal total revenues.

In spite of the mitigation funds provided, the Board made difficult decisions to cut \$62.8 million of expenditures from program areas such as adult education and Board administration. These reductions represent the beginning of a significant

restructuring exercise for the Board as it moves towards the reduced provincial funding target.

The Board is currently in the process of a comprehensive review of all areas of its operations in order to determine the full impact of the required expenditure reductions. This review will result in the establishment of a multi-year budget plan for the Board, which will include a community consultation plan and a timetable for implementation. This process will also provide the Board with information to support its request for provincial funding changes to address public education concerns in a large and complex urban centre.

The following is a summary of the Board's Statement of Operations.

1998/99 Expenditures in (\$Millions) Total Expenditures: \$2.182.6

Non-classroom \$436.5 (20%)

School Operations \$274.7 (12.6%)



Classroom \$1,187.3 (54.4%) Administration \$151.9 (7%)

Debt Service \$51.6 (2.4%)

Transportation \$33.0 (1.5%)

Increase in Reserves \$24.7 (1.1%)

Facilities Renewal 5 22.9 (1.0%)

Recovery of Expenditures:

• Government of Canada \$ 28.0

Government of Ontario
 (other grants)

\$ 33.8

Other revenue

(including recoveries from leases, permits and other sources) \$ 53.

Total Recoveries: \$ 115.3

Net Expenditures: \$2,067.3

Funding of Net Expenditures:

Local Taxes \$ 1.418.0

Total Funding: \$2.067.3

The Need for an Improved Funding Formula

The amalgamation process presents opportunities for savings throughout Toronto's public education sys-

The savings from amalgamation, however, are separate from the challenges presented by provincial government's funding formula.

In its report on the TDSB amalgamation process, the province's Education Improvement Commission acknowledged that the provincial funding formula needs to be reviewed:

"...the terms and conditions that determine the amount of this funding are inadequate to meet the substantial and exceptional challenges faced in this area by a large metropolitan, cosmopolitan board such as the Toronto District School Board."

Funding reductions may reduce the level of service to our students, however, the Board is working diligently to ensure that our excellent programs are maintained.

In the Spring of 1999, the School Board fought for an extra \$56 million in funding, to avoid the closure of 138 schools. We were successful. There will still be some school closures – approximately 30 over the next three years – but these are the result of population shifts and have been identified through the TDSB's streamlining process. Phase One will see nine schools closed next September.

To minimize the effect of these school closures, the TDSB has undertaken a consultation process to gain input from parents, communities, students, staff and others directly affected by the closures.

In other areas, we will continue to communicate the unique needs of our school system to the Province to ensure that adequate funding is received.







In today's world, change is the only constant.

Faced with this reality, the challenge to all organizations is to manage that change to strengthen and preserve public wherever possible and to plan for the future while remaining flexible enough to handle the unexpected.

1999 certainly proved that the Toronto District School Board knows how to manage change, and how to turn challenge into opportunity.

We are proud of the strong partnerships we have formed with our stakeholders and our communities, especially parents, and how we have all worked together to forge a vision for our future.

It is a vision for a system that will always put students and their need for quality education at the top of the priority list:

- · a system committed to student achievement and success
- · an open, responsive system for parents and other community members to be involved in the education of our progress. Please contact us at: children
- · a system that gives teachers the support and resources they need to meet increased expectations
- · an efficient, well-managed system that spends tax dollars wisely while protecting the priority services for our students and communities.

It has taken truly innovative thinking education as tremendous change takes place all around us. We will continue to think and work creatively on behalf of students, parents, educators, and taxpayers.

In the next year, we look forward to completing our transition to one, unified Board. In the long term, we look forward w onfidence to meeting emerging challenges, while maintaining excellence in our public education system.

For more information . . .

We look forward to your thoughts and input as we educate our students. We will continue to strive to keep parents, guardians, taxpayers and staff informed about our ongoing commitment to education, day-to-day activities and www@tdsb.on.ca or (416) 397-3000.